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ABSTRACT

The print version of the first issue of an electronic journal, this document consists of an article by Samuel Simpson, Managua Regional Director of Adult Education in Nicaragua. Simpson's visit to the United States was sponsored by Pennsylvania State University, the University of Pittsburgh, Rutgers University, and the Syracuse University Kellogg Project. Topics covered include the following: (1) the scene in Nicaragua, including the necessity of continuing educational work within the context of war and economic subsistence; (2) the National Literacy Crusade conducted in 1980, during which the illiteracy rate dropped from over 50 percent to under 13 percent in 5 months; (3) the organization of the adult education program; (4) program revision since 1985; (5) current educational problems and what is being done to overcome them, including "mini-crusades" that operate at the local level and the use of a wooden mimeograph process (similar to the silk screen process) to produce basic education materials; and (6) future plans. The document includes a list of five sources of supplemental reading in English and five in Spanish. Information on joining AEDNET, the electronic mail network through which "New Horizons" is accessed, concludes the document. (CML)

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NEW HORIZONS IN ADULT EDUCATION

Volume 1 Number 1 Fall 1987

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CONTENTS

Adult Education in Nicaragua: Adapting and Growing in a Changing Reality
.....by Samuel Simpson.....

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FORUM

If you are interested in participating in an on-line discussion of articles in NEW HORIZONS, send your comments as an E-mail (AED_GSEJ@SUVM). We will then publish your remarks to all readers. Through electronic, forum-like dialogue, we hope to encourage communication and, at the same time, distill some of the problems and issues we encounter both as students and professionals in the field of adult education.

NEW HORIZONS IN ADULT EDUCATION

Samuel Simpson is the Managua Regional Director of Adult Education in Nicaragua. His visit to the United States was sponsored by the joint efforts of Pennsylvania State University, University of Pittsburgh, Rutgers University, and the Syracuse University Kellogg Project.

ADULT EDUCATION IN NICARAGUA: ADAPTING AND GROWING IN A CHANGING REALITY

INTRODUCTION

Companeras y companeros, I would like to begin this presentation by addressing you with the term we use in Nicaragua - companero. This is a word which, as far as I know, has no translation in English. It's a word which carries with it a rich series of connotations, depending on the context it is used in. But in this setting it implies a certain amount of mutual trust, or perhaps we could say the will to share and support one another, to comprehend each others ways, the lives we live and the daily reality we face.

And so it is with this desire and willingness to share our experiences that I would like to start out by extending the warm greetings of the Nicaraguan people, and particularly those of us who are involved in the Adult Education Program, both educators and learners.

Secondly, I would like to express my appreciation to you all, to the organizers of this event and to all of you who have come to participate, for allowing me the possibility to share with you some of our experiences in adult education. We've had our ups and downs, made mistakes and also

succeeded at overcoming considerable challenges. At times the experience has been exhilarating and other times very trying, but rarely dull. And so I feel honored at being asked to make this presentation.

I'd like to start by setting the scene so to speak. I don't know how many of you have been to Nicaragua. There are many Americans living and working there and thousands that visit each year. Nicaragua has received tremendous support from the American people, donations, work brigades, as well as the active solidarity work that is carried on here. But even with this constant flow of people and information back and forth, it is quite rare that one has the chance to really get to know our country, to understand how we think, what we feel. And this extends into our educational system, how we conceive of education, why we feel it's important, how we organize it, and why so many Nicaraguans continue to pour so much energy into our struggle to eliminate illiteracy and assure a basic education for all our people, young and old.

As you know our country has been in a state of war for many years now. The entire country is affected, although actual combat only takes place in certain areas. The war puts a terrible strain on our economy as well as leaving deep physical and emotional scars, which are added to those accumulated during the insurrection against Somoza. We should also mention here the underdevelopment and economic dependency inherited from the period of the dictatorship, as well as a massive foreign debt. All these influences create conditions which can be extremely trying, making it appear impossible to carry out even the most basic tasks required to implement an adult education program.

I'd like to also mention a little about the level of participation of our people. For us, democracy depends on the active participation of the people. I'm not referring here only to the legal structures for participation but also to the capacity to participate - and by this I mean the participation skills one has because it is an ability which must be learned - as well as the motivation one has for participating. The years of dictatorship did not allow for any significant participation in the political life of the country and control of the economy was in the hands of an extremely small minority. Underdevelopment, repression, poverty, the idealization of foreign culture and consequent lack of esteem given to traditional values and customs; all of these influences worked together to stunt any cultural and social growth. And so we inherited a country of inhabitants with very little experience in participating. The development of these skills and the political structures which permit an active participation, as well as creating the interest and motivation to participate, are central to our ideas about education.

And so I could summarize this by saying that we must continue our educational work within the context of war and economic subsistence. And a central focus of our educational work is to assure the development of what we call "popular participation" or, in other words, the participation of the majority of the people to the fullest possible extent, and thus assure that the revolution we are having in Nicaragua remain a "popular revolution", that it build a "popular democracy". And we have decided that the best educational approach, the most appropriate given these conditions and our needs, is one that we call "popular education".

THE NATIONAL LITERACY CRUSADE

In a little while I will go more into detail about what we mean by popular education", but first I'd like to point out some of the more significant aspects of the National Literacy Crusade in 1980.

The insurrectional period was incredibly hard work for many Nicaraguans and caused a lot of suffering as well as joy. The population had lived in a state of constant tension and with the overthrow of Somoza a tremendous amount of energy was unleashed which needed to be channeled in a positive direction. The National Literacy Crusade became what was called the "second war of liberation", a war to "conquer ignorance". It was the first massive grass-roots mobilization after the insurrection and the first opportunity to address centuries of exploitation.

We can say that the Crusade was primarily a political project which had pedagogical implications. Even if nobody had learned to read, the results would have been worth it, although I have to admit we wouldn't have received world acclaim! It gave the youth, many of whom were suffering from war trauma, a creative and positive way to channel their energy. the city and countryside were linked in a vital and personal way, permitting an exchange of rural and urban experiences and consequently, a deeper understanding and respect for the differences between the two. It developed new relationships and strong bonds between the student and worker, the city dweller and the peasant, the young and the old. The "brigadistas", as the volunteer literacy workers were called, worked alongside their students during the day, thus becoming students themselves as they learned the skills of those that were learning to read and write. It was the beginning of a closer relationship between work and study which was to become a principle of the "new education" in Nicaragua.

I said that the Crusade was a massive grass-roots mobilization and it was also an amazing feat of organization. I'd like to go into this a bit more. The initial step we took was to choose 80 people who would test the materials and methods which had been developed. Based on the results of these pilot projects, we developed the final educational materials, taking into account the life style, working conditions, ways of thinking and language of those who would be using them. Schools were temporarily closed so that the students who wished to participate would be able to volunteer, along with housewives and workers, and become the future "brigadistas". The original 80 participants then led workshops where they trained 600 volunteers. Through a process of multiplication, these 600 went on to train 12,000 and so on until eventually 100,000 brigadistas were ready to be sent out to all areas of the country.

And so off they went, and just getting them to where they were going was quite a challenge. And there they stayed five months, working alongside the peasants during the day and afterwards leading two-hour classes, five days a week and participating in "Saturday workshops" which allowed them to become more skilled in their educational work and share experiences. but this wasn't all they did. We also took this opportunity to advance in other areas. The brigadistas helped to reduce malaria

through educational work around health, they collected oral history, flora, fauna and information concerning employment and commerce, carried out educational activities with children, transcribed legends and traditional songs and did an agricultural census. I mention all of this because it really served as a model for future work, for example the literacy work we are carrying on now, which I will explain more about in a moment.

POPULAR EDUCATION

Another point I would like to mention here is the methodology we used during the Crusade. Here I'll explain a bit about what we mean by "popular education", because that is what the Crusade was, and its the type of education we are attempting to use throughout our entire educational system, although it will take us many years to reach this point.

I should start by saying that a popular education curriculum is based on the experience and reality of the learner. This is not so easy when you use a national test and Nicaragua is a very diverse country. So we tried to find points of common interest, such as health, production, education, defense, etc. But really the single, most important reality which was of interest to everyone was the revolution. The vast majority had participated in one way or another during the insurrectional period and a dictatorship of almost 50 years had been overthrown. The revolution, and what it meant, was of vital interest to them and that is why we included what we did in the initial text. We couldn't separate politics and education because they are vitally linked in the reality, in the daily lives of the learners.

The methodology of popular education is based on a process of observation, analysis and practice. We could also state this as a process of work-study-work or practice-theory-practice. The main emphasis here is that the educational process not remain at the intellectual level, that what is learned be used and that it serve to benefit the society and not just the individual.

This is also key, because this education is participatory. It encourages the participation of all, recognizing that everyone has knowledge based on their experience. By sharing our experiences and observations we enrich the learning process, converting it into an active and dynamic learning experience. Our education is collective. We promote collectivism, not at the expense of individual growth, but rather to encourage the participation of the people in their community organizations, their unions, their church groups and so on. As I said earlier, it is this participation which will assure democracy and with it, development of our country's resources.

And so we can summarize here by saying that the curriculum used during the Crusade was based, as much as possible, on the most significant aspects of the learners reality. The methodology was one of observing this reality and analyzing it collectively, and using the new knowledge attained in this process in their daily lives.

I'd like to give an example of what I mean here in practical terms. Let's say, for example, that the theme of a lesson is latrines. Here we could discuss hygiene and contamination, how to construct an outhouse, as well as where they are needed within the community. In this process we use reading and writing skills, and very possibly math skills, we improve our ability to express ourselves as well as practicing our skills in observation and analysis. At the same time the learners become motivated to organize themselves, to improve the situation within the community, and consequently they learn more through practice. This could include organizing skills, practice in construction, even accounting and lobbying. It's a type of educational experience which goes well beyond the classroom, which is why we say that the revolution itself is a "school without walls."

THE CRUSADE AND THE BIRTH OF THE ADULT EDUCATION PROGRAM

And so, getting back to the Crusade. I should mention that many people did learn to read and write! The figure I have is actually over 400,000. The illiteracy rate dropped from over 50 percent to just under 13 percent in five short months, an astounding accomplishment which was officially recognized by the United Nations when they granted us the UNESCO award in late 1980.

The Crusade was our first experience in adult education on such a large-scale, and it gave birth to the Adult Education Program. Many of the characteristics of the Crusade were adopted and expanded upon. We can include here the methodology and conception of popular education and the basic organizational structure used during the Crusade, including the use of volunteers who were later called "popular teachers", small study groups called "Popular Education Collectives" and training carried out through a process of multiplication.

Another important element of the Crusade, which was also incorporated into the Adult Education Program, was the involvement of the grass-roots organizations. We believe that education is not only a right but also a responsibility of all citizens. This is specified in our constitution. And the Crusade would not have been possible if it were not for the tremendous participation of these organizations. At a later date there was a period of reduced involvement and we felt the effects. It helped us to re-evaluate the importance of the people's participation in education.

THE PRESENT STRUCTURE OF THE ADULT EDUCATION PROGRAM

What I have tried to do up until now is put our work in an historical context. I've also tried to explain a bit about how we see the relationship between society and education and consequently the reasons for the type of curriculum and methodology we use. Now I would like to briefly present the way our program is set up, its overall structure, so that I can go on to talking about the difficulties we now face as well as some of our achievements.

The Ministry of Education runs three subsystems which offer direct service. One is General Basic Education which operates the primary and secondary schools for children and youths. Then there is Technical Education which is roughly equivalent to technical or commercial high-school. The third subsystem is Adult Popular Education. We don't run all the adult education services in Nicaragua. Many of the unions, associations and political groups, as well as other ministries, have their own programs, but these tend to be specialized, oriented towards the specific interests of the group.We offer what is considered a general basic education, similar to the public school system, but oriented towards adults and working youths. We include these youths because of their experience in the adult world as well as for logistical reasons. Sometimes even children attend adult education classes, but this is due to the absence of primary school in certain rural areas.

The subsystem of "Adult Popular Education", which I have been referring to as the "Program", is really divided into three departments. One is "Literacy", the introductory level. Then we have "Basic Popular Education" which builds on the basic introductory level and offers a general basic education. We could say that it is parallel to primary school although not the same. Finally we have a department called "Special Plans and Projects", which deals with more advanced education. It offers the secondary school level and includes "Adult Secondary Nightschool" as one of its programs.

The Program as a whole uses two basic educational structures at the grass-roots level. One is similar to the classroom school situation in most educational programs. The teachers are paid professionals and the classes are held in schools. The Secondary Nightschools as well as the "Centers for Adult Education", which are part of Basic Popular Education, have these characteristics. These programs existed before the insurrection and part of the educational system we inherited. There have been a lot of changes, particularly in terms of methodology and curriculum, but the basic structure remains unchanged.

The other educational structure we use was adopted from the Literacy Crusade. We call it the "Popular Education Collective" which often meets in schools, but also in workplaces, community centers, churches and homes, wherever there is an appropriate space. The teachers are volunteers, "popular teachers" as I mentioned before, many of whom have very little education. Some of them learned to read and write during the Crusade. Others are formally trained teachers who work in primary schools during the day and teach adults voluntarily in the evenings. They also include high school students, housewives and workers. This is the new type of educational structure which has grown with the revolution. It is qualitatively different from the other structure, and also allows us to reach thousands of adults who otherwise would be unable to study. The curriculum and methodology used have their roots in the crusade and have undergone a number of changes throughout these years, along with changes in scheduling the school year and class times.

And so to summarize, we have three general areas within the Adult Education Program: Literacy, Basic Popular Education and Special Plans and Projects. And we use two basic educational structures at the grass-roots

level: the old formal classroom-teacher unit and the new Popular Education Collective.

THE PROCESS OF REVISION IN EDUCATION

As I said the Adult Education Program has grown and developed with the revolution. We feel that we have made very significant advances, but only by facing the difficulties, by recognizing our errors and taking the necessary steps to rectify them. And one of these errors was allowing the Adult Education Program to slip into a gradual formalization. By this I mean we developed a tendency to imitate the primary school system. We stopped putting so much emphasis on the participation of our people's organizations. We sought to solve our problems through bureaucratic means, more paperwork and less decision-making at the local level. And all of this at a time when the war was hitting hard and the economic crisis deepening.

The first four years of revolution - and by revolution we mean the evolution of a new society, not the insurrectional period, because the revolution continues today; it is a long process - these years between 1979 and 1983 were years of growth, of rapid expansion. The educational system grew and changed, and Nicaragua became a small laboratory of educational experiments. The Adult Education Program spread throughout the whole country and began to develop a post-literacy program. What we now call Basic Popular Education. But there wasn't any model for this type of nation-wide popular education program. And so we tended to copy the primary school program in areas such as subject matter, timetables, etc. in the attempt to make it equivalent.

By 1984, the impact of the growing violence of war and the economic restrictions it imposed came down full force. Further expansion was out of the question. Hundreds of schools were closed and many destroyed. Almost 200 teachers and students had been killed and the suspension of educational services in certain areas affected by the war forced over 45,000 Nicaraguans to stop studying. At the same time, we should also add that the need for defense, both locally and nationally, disrupted Nicaraguan life at all levels, affecting education very seriously.

Looking at this, it is easy to understand how meeting the educational needs of our people could become extremely difficult. But there was, and still is I might add, the additional problem of underdevelopment. The majority of our teachers are inadequately trained and many self-taught. Few of our educational workers have sufficient knowledge or experience in methodological and curricular transformation. And to this we can also include a long list of bureaucratic problems which tend to slow down the process of change and transformation.

And so, by 1985, all these influences began to come together, and we were forced to begin a process of serious reflection. Not only in education, this was something that began to happen on a lot of levels throughout the country. But the Ministry of Education began to review the educational system within this framework I mentioned earlier, of war and

economic subsistence. And this was very positive. It led to a series of changes and new initiatives. And one of the most profound aspects of this revision was the decision to develop and apply "popular education" throughout the entire system. We feel that, given the extreme limitations we face, it is the only way we can offer an education to our people which responds to their individual needs as well as to those of the country. And at the same time, as I explained before, it promotes a participation which reinforces the grass-roots and democratic character of the revolution.

THE PRESENT PROBLEMS IN LITERACY AND ADULT EDUCATION IN NICARAGUA

I'd like to speak more specifically about some of the actual problems we are facing now and mention a few figures, as well as give you some examples of how we've been dealing with these problems in practical terms.

The two most serious problems we face are the increase in the illiteracy rate and an insufficient ability to respond to the basic education needs of the adult population.

The illiteracy rate in Nicaragua is now calculated at 20 percent of the adult population. This is a 7 percent increase since the Crusade. This new figure is partly due to the lack of adequate follow-up of those who learned to read and write during the Crusade. Less than half went on to post literacy study. We've also had problems with drawing new students into the program as well as retaining those who are already studying. Between 1983 and 1986, enrollment was on a continuous decline, although I should add that this year the tendency has began to reverse itself. Less people were advancing through the different levels and many were dropping out. This is the national tendency I'm talking about, because in some areas of the country we've been making incredible progress, but nationally this tendency has been very apparent.

But adult illiteracy has its roots at the primary school level, and here we can see serious problems. Between 60 and 70 percent of children who are studying in rural areas are older than the appropriate age for their grade. Many children either have no access to educational facilities or don't attend for one reason or other, and this means we have almost 200,000 children between seven and ten years of age who can't read and write. It is these children who soon start to work and consequently fall under the responsibility of the Adult Education Program.

I've talked a bit about the formalization of our Program. We could look at this in a little more detail to see why it has caused us problems. We started out with developing four levels of Basic Popular Education. This is how we originally conceived of post-literacy study after the Crusade. We felt one semester was sufficient for each level and that two levels could be covered in one year. Later we felt the need for two more levels. Six all together, which was really an attempt to find an equivalency for primary school. Well in reality it was very difficult to cover two levels in one year. That was because we had a standard school year which made it very difficult to adapt to the regional differences in production. Adults work and this means that a peasant that has to work

from dawn to dusk getting the harvest in is probably not going to have too much energy left over to study. Then again, there are times when things are so slow that she or he would be happy to spend more time with their studies. This rigidity put a real damper on things and meant that, in most cases, these six levels really took six years instead of three. And this is a lot to ask of a worker, to put aside six years just to get a basic education which doesn't really advance them much in their trade.

Another problem here, which I have also mentioned, is the national character of the texts. It meant that the content had to be of general interest, that it was unable to respond to regional interests. And that can get boring. We find that when the content of the study material directly relates to the daily lives of the learners, they are more motivated. Overcoming this problem really means developing educational materials at the regional and local levels, and this requires a variety of skills as well as material and human resources.

We've also not been able to give enough attention to the popular teachers in terms of ongoing training as well as within the actual teaching environment. We have to remember that these teachers are volunteers from the community. many have little or no formal education which can be an advantage as well as a disadvantage. It can break down the traditional teacher-student division, but it can also make training more difficult. To be able to lead a class using the methodology of popular education means we have to have a clear conceptual understanding. We must also be able to direct discussion but not dominate it, not give the answers but rather let them be discovered by the group as a whole, and this requires a lot of skill.

HOW WE ARE FACING THESE PROBLEMS

So we do have many problems and they are quite serious, especially given the incredibly difficult conditions we face. But we are facing them, and we are finding solutions. We are approaching things from two standpoints. One is the general transformation at the national scale and the other, at the regional and local level, is by means of pilot projects and mini-crusades. We have now developed a new national literacy strategy, with the participation of our people's grass-roots organization as well as the other educational sectors. We realize we can't fall back on our earlier strategy, organizing a national campaign to eliminate illiteracy as we did in 1980. We just can't afford the cost in money and human resources at this point. We still have a war and very serious economic difficulties. But we are able to do similar work on a local scale.

One of our approaches is the use of brigades. We have many examples of this. One is what we call the "25th Anniversary Brigade", which last year was composed of more than 800 students and teachers from the city. These young people spend three months a year living in rural areas, teaching reading and writing; building schools, outhouses, bridges, parks; working to strengthen community organizations and motivating the people to take a more active role in the resolution of their problems. Another brigade is called "Flor de Maria Vargas". It is composed of 500 secondary

school students who go to different urban neighborhoods after school to carry out their literacy work. They also participate in other activities such as vaccination campaigns, repairing roads, organizing neighborhood vegetable gardens and so on.

Another approach is what we call the "Rural Educational Front". It generally incorporates brigades but also involves a coordinated effort along with other organizations in the area, for example the teachers union, farm workers associations, political and religious groups, parents associations and student unions. It's a way of attacking the problem on all fronts, emphasizing both primary and adult education, and involves the various organizations in promoting participation. A good example of this is "Operation Carlos Fonseca" which is organized in one of our more isolated regions. This "special zone", as we call it, had an illiteracy rate of 95 percent before the Crusade and will be declared "free of illiteracy" before the end of this year. Another example is in Ciudad Sandino, a traditionally marginalized zone just outside of Managua. Illiteracy there was roughly 60 percent before the Crusade and now is estimated at approximately 8 percent. Both these areas have received a "Mention of Honour" from UNESCO for their outstanding work.

We also have the task of transforming curriculum, restructuring school calendars and improving the training of educational workers. There is an obvious need to create educational materials and adapt school calendars in order to respond to local and regional differences. We've now given the regions, which are like small states, the responsibility to organize study timetables according to the local conditions. This often means that within one region, classes may start in April and end in October in one area and go all year round in another. This can make distributing study materials, gathering statistics, and so on, more difficult but it was a necessary adjustment.

Transforming curriculum is a much greater job. Many regions have started producing their own texts, but it is a long slow process. There are few people with the technical and pedagogical experience needed to do this work adequately and material and financial resources are extremely limited. To give you an idea of what I mean, in some regions there are no photocopy machines that work, in others no printing presses. Even at the national level, which has more access to material and financial resources, there are not enough typewriters or desks, people take their notes on the back side of used paper, often there is no photography paper in the photo lab, no typewriter ribbon for typesetting, the list is endless. And so this regionalization of material production means learning to print with the most basic materials, adapting what can be found, and not expecting a sophisticated quality. But even given these limitations, new literacy texts have been produced and pilot projects have been launched with their own study materials. Even peasants are learning to use what we call a wooden mimeograph, something akin to the silkscreen process, to produce basic education materials.

I should add that we are also in an intermediary process of developing national texts which condense the six levels into a form that can more realistically be covered in six semesters, in other words three years. The content is being adjusted so it includes themes that are more relevant to the adult learner today in Nicaragua, because today things are quite

different from what they were in 1980. We've had seven years of revolution as well as seven years of war since then. And so we see this as a short term response to these problems.

As far as training goes, we really have two areas to improve upon; the quality and the quantity. It's expensive business getting people together in workshops, finding them a place to sleep and feeding them. And so it hasn't been too easy to increase the quantity. There have been many changes in the type of training given. An example is the training given to those who teach in the more formal part of the Adult Education Program. These people are generally professionals who work at other jobs during the day and usually have little pedagogical training. There are no texts although there are study plans. And so the students rely on the lectures given and a reading list instead of standard texts. In a way this makes changing the methodology and content easier, although this is a long process. We're starting by teaching the popular education methodology, getting the teachers to understand what it all means, and this isn't so easy because most of them have very traditional viewpoints regarding education. We've also produced some support material, especially for the basic level, and adjusted study plans.

In order to improve the training of popular teachers, we must first improve the training of the educational workers who coordinate this task. And so we've been holding numerous workshops with those who work at the Program's local, regional and national offices, and not only with them but also involving participants from the other subsystems and the grass-roots organizations. This is important because if we're really going to transform the entire system we can't remain isolated from the rest of the world. Most of us, both teachers and non-teachers, hold pretty traditional views about education, and in some cases more traditional than many of the views commonly held here. You must remember that our school system has traditionally been extremely rigid and authoritarian, and so these concepts, these ideas about education, are difficult to change.

WHERE WE STAND NOW AND LOOKING TOWARDS THE FUTURE

This is a very broad topic. Really I could go on for a long time. I suppose I already have but there is still so much left to talk about. I've tried to give you a general overview of the adult education work we are doing in Nicaragua, some of the problems and also how we're dealing with them. I would like to add that, even with all our problems, we've been able to make a lot of advances. And the most important is that nearly all our people have the possibility to study. We now have educational services throughout the country, including in the war zones, and all education is free.

I'd like to add that we are a new and young government. In 1979, most of us had little experience in this type of work. For many, the Crusade was our first opportunity to teach, to organize an educational program, to develop study content. we learned through practice, trial and error, and we continue to do so because we are not copying any pre-set plan. Our revolution is based on this, based on the participation of all in the

search for solutions to our problems and ways to advance. We feel that we are building something new and it's very exciting.

It's true we have many problems. As you know, the war continues and war is very destructive. But we are optimistic about the future. We are presently in a process of peace agreements in Central America. This is a very positive step forward. It's the first time we've been able to reach an agreement with all the presidents of Central America and we are actively taking the steps required of us to carry out our side of the agreement. We have strong international support in this process although the United States president has taken an extremely negative attitude. But we feel we are making great progress. Many of those who were fighting with the counter-revolution have given up their arms and many Nicaraguans have returned with the amnesty process. Peace appears to be a possibility.

Ending the war is a political battle but dealing with the effects of war also involves obtaining material, financial and human resources. And so I just want to add how we feel about solidarity. We have received ongoing financial, material and technical aid from countries all over the world. Government support has been outstanding but the solidarity of the people even more so. And here I also include the political solidarity. The federal U.S. government has done little to promote peace or deal with the effects of war in Nicaragua. All the opposite - it has been actively supporting the war. But the American people have organized brigades, built schools and health centers, picked cotton and coffee. Your people have participated in study tours, sent technical workers, written books, produced movies. You have organized demonstrations and public meetings, promoted material and financial aid campaigns. One American has died, murdered by the counterrevolution, and another has lost his legs right here in the United States for trying to stop the arms shipment. And these companeros hold a very special significance for us. I think I can say that the Nicaraguan people now understand the importance of solidarity, of the support of one people for another.

I'd like to end by thanking you once more for this opportunity to share some of our experiences with you. I hope I haven't gone on too long and that there is still time to ask questions and have some discussion. I thank you very much for your attention and hope I've been able to give you a better understanding of what we are experiencing in Nicaragua today, something of our history, our challenges and our hopes for the future.

Thank you very much.

SUPPLEMENTAL READINGS

English-language Publications
(from Hirshon & Butler)

Black, G., & Bevan, J. (1980). Loss of fear: Education--Nicaragua

before and after the revolution. London: Nicaraguan Solidarity Campaign, World University Service.

Hirshon, Sheryl L., & Butler, Judy (1983). And also teach them to read. Westport, Connecticut: Lawrence Hill & Company.

Miller, Valerie (1982). Nicaraguan literacy crusade. In Nicaragua in revolution (ed. Thomas W. Walker). New York: Praeger Publishers.

Miller, Valerie (1983). Nicaraguan literacy crusade: Education for transformation (Doctoral dissertation, University of Massachusetts).

Spanish-language Publications
(from Hirshon & Butler)

Aleman, Luis, et al. Vencimos: La Cruzada Nacional de Alfabetizacion de Nicaragua: Libro Abierto para Americana Latina.

Assman, Hugo, ed. (1981). Nicaragua: Triunfa en la Alfabetizacion: Documentos y testimonios de la Cruzada Nacional de Alfabetizacion. San Jose, Costa Rica: Departimento Ecumenico de Investigaciones.

Castella, Miguel de. (1980). Educacion y Lucha de Clases en Nicaragua. Managua: Publicaciones del Departimento de Filosofia, Universidad Centroamericana.

Chacon, Alicia, & Pozas, Victor S. (1980). Cruzada Nacional de Alfabetizacion. Nicargua.

-----.Documentes: Primer Congreso Nacional de Educacion Popular de Adultos. Managua, August 1981.

KELLOGG PROJECT

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This is how to join AEDNET: If you're not familiar with electronic messaging, call Barbara Florini at the Kellogg Project office (315-443-1095) for some orientation. But generally, if you're not currently using BITNET, call your local college or university and find out if they belong to BITNET or any non-commercial networks that have gateways to BITNET. If you can get an account, learn how to use the mailing software at your site, then send a message to AEDNET@SUVM. BITNET & AEDNET@SUVM.ACS.SYR.EDU saying you'd like to become a member.

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